

Heavenly Haven: The Calvin Gardner House

By DEBORA BABIN KATZ

In his travels in 1849, Henry David Thoreau was "struck agreeably" by the architecture of the Cape Cod, which dotted the seacoast communities of Southern Massachusetts. He found beauty in the number, size and position of the Cape's windows, and functionality in their varying pitched roofs. Although not on Thoreau's tour, The Calvin Gardner House at 366 Washington Street – a delightful Cape Cod with a Southern influence – would certainly have given him much to write home about.



continued on page 24



Built in 1830, the Calvin Gardner House at 366 Washington Street is a unique Cape Cod with Southern flair.

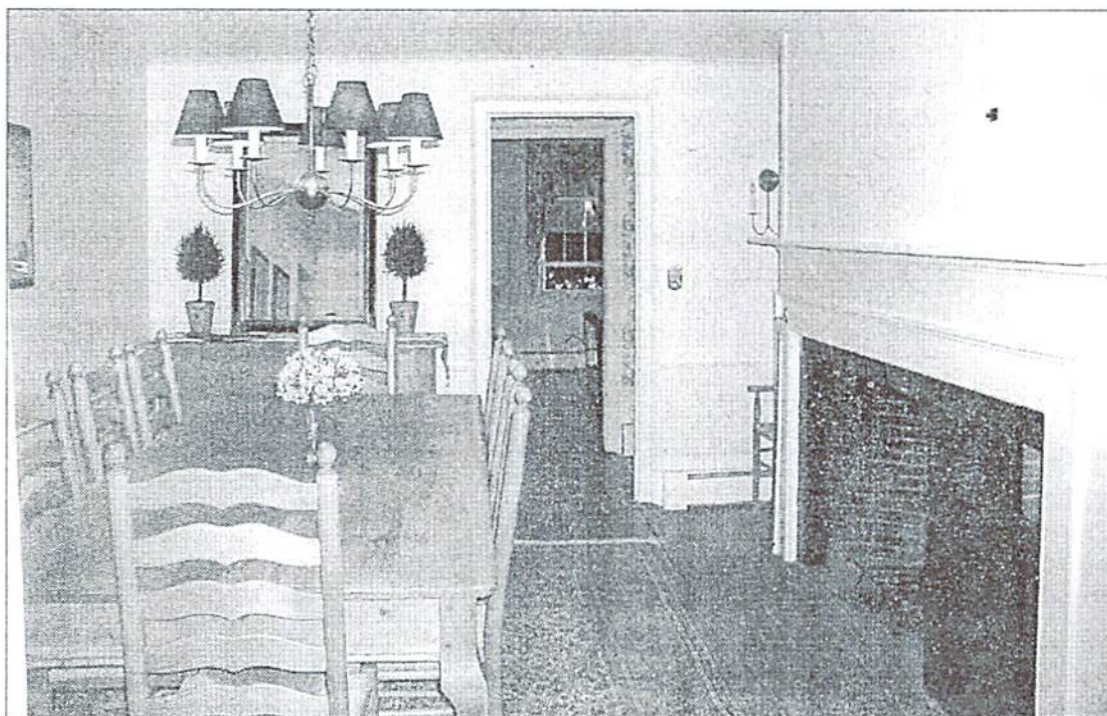
Photo by D.B. Katz

Heavenly Haven: The Calvin Gardner House

continued from front page

In 1829, Samuel Winsor, a young Duxbury mariner sold a lot (part of his family's vast homestead that extended west from Duxbury Bay and encompassed both sides of Winsor Street) for \$50 to Calvin Gardner, a native of Hingham. This same year, Samuel Winsor's son, Spencer, and his wife Charlotte Howett of North Carolina named their new born son Calvin Gardner Winsor, which attests to Gardner's close connection to the merchant Winsor family.

The following year, Gardner with his wife Mary Ellms of Scituate and their three children Calvin Jr., Mary, and Mary Elizabeth, moved into their new home nestled among Winsors.



The keeping room, or kitchen, is today a formal dining room with large, open hearth to warm dinner guests on cold winter evenings.

Photo by D.B. Katz



Location: 336 Washington Street

Style: Cape Cod with Southern flair

Living Area: 2,536 sq. feet plus lower level

Lot size: .38 acres

Rooms: 12

Baths: 2 full, 1 half

Bedrooms: 5

Fireplaces: 7

Special Historic Features: Original restored wide pine floors, 5 original (plus 2 newer) working fireplaces with original mantels and moldings and 1 beehive oven, built-ins, wainscoting, Victorian claw tub and porcelain fixtures.

Sale Price: \$939,000

Property Taxes: \$8,210

Listing Broker: Ellen Thurston - 781-679-2862

Listed By: Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage

Gardner may have traded in the textiles business, as he later moved to the Mecca of the textile industry, Lowell, Massachusetts. He was first a packet ship master (captain) and later a trader, and would have sailed his schooner to destinations such as New Orleans. His travels to Southern ports may have inspired his architectural design for the Duxbury house, as it is distinctly different from other Cape Cods found along this byway. An extended Southern styled roof, supported by white pillars, surrounded the house with two separate chimneys at each end rising through it.

Today, an exterior secret panel on the porch reveals the roof's hand-hewn support beams and pegged joists, and attests to the fine workmanship of the structure.

The front door is found on the south side, facing away from Washington Street, and creates a different and expansive interior layout than the traditional full Cape Cod with central fireplace. Gardner's design provided a large front hallway, with front and rear parlors, a large keeping room at the front of the house, and a

rear barning room, all off the hallway with a stairwell leading to several upstairs bedrooms. The four chimneys provided ample heat and elegance in each room without using up valuable interior space.

Before their first anniversary in the house, however, Calvin and Mary Gardner moved to Lowell. He sold the unique Cape Cod for \$925 to 11 individuals, including Samuel Winsor who, with Bradford Hoimes, Gershom B. Weston and Zenas Faunce, paid more and received larger shares in the property. The remaining buyers were all single men with ties to the sea and one female widow, Matilda Peterson.

For the next three years, the house may have operated as a boarding place for ship carpenters, sailors and other tradesmen while Widow Peterson stoked up the beehive oven and prepared meals.

Then in 1834, the 11 shareholders sold the property, again for \$925, to Peleg Cook, a ship carpenter, who settled in with his wife, Jane Cushing, and two year old daughter Georgina. Peleg and Jane never had other children; they had lost a daughter, Jane



A wall separating two parlors was removed to create an expansive and elegant living room with working fireplaces on

Maria, at age one in 1829. Years after the Cook's ownership, Jane's broken gravestone was found on the property; however, she was buried at Mayflower Cemetery in the family plot. The broken stone with engraved weeping willow and urn probably broke at the cemetery and was replaced, but the still grieving Cooks chose to keep it in a garden on the property.

Georgina Cook grew up in the well cared for home, and married Amherst A. Alden (whose great, great, great grandparents were John and Priscilla Alden) and had two daughters, Jennie, and Carrie May Alden, who died at the age of eight.

For the next 92 years, the house remained in the Cook family. In 1883, at age 81, Peleg died of heart disease, and willed the house to his wife, Jane, who left it to their daughter after her death two years later. Georgina and Amherst lived in Boston and kept the house for a summer residence until Georgina's death in 1911 when their unmarried daughter, Jennie, inherited the property and retained it as a summer residence while spending her winters in Boston working as a piano teacher.

By 1936, three female school teachers, Clara Harding from Lynn, Massachusetts, Ella Needham of Boston, and Helen Blaisdale from Westerly, Rhode Island, owned the Cape Cod for a summer residence, and later winterized the house for their retirement. Not until the 1960s, under the Wendell Jacques family ownership, did major restorations and renovations occur to the property, including an expansive back addition.

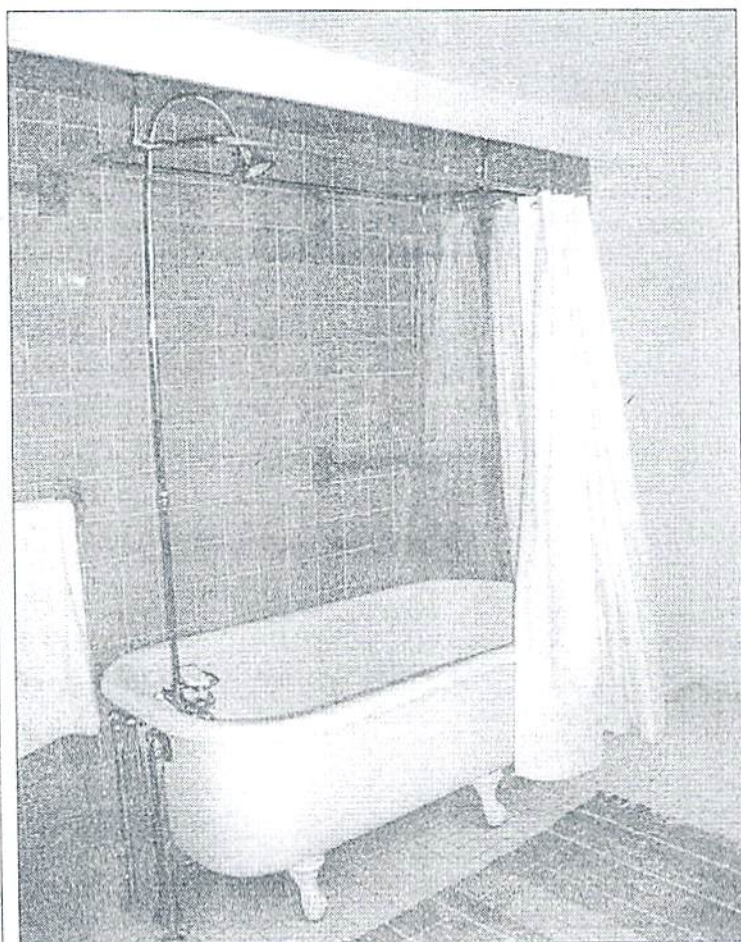
A Victorian clawed tub, porcelain fixtures and modern master bathroom suite have long replaced the outhouse, and the original bright red picture

in the basement no longer stores water but household goods. The large keeping room with beehive stove no longer serves as a kitchen but formal dining room.

Later owners have all added their touches to the property, but the original antique house has remained virtually untouched. The wall that separated the front and back parlors was removed to create a large living room with fireplaces at each end. There are wide pine floors in pristine condition throughout the house. All the original moldings, mantels and wainscoting, paneled doors, hinges, beehive stove and brickwork display the craftsmanship of local ship carpenters and tradesmen.

Current owners, Moira and Nick Koulopoulos, have continued the home's long history of preservation and appreciation for its antique features.

Though the back extension provides more modern amenities than the days of Gardner and Cook – fireplace master bedroom, modern kitchen with breakfast nook, large fire hearth family room with spiral staircase to a fireplace recreational space, mud room, and home office – the historic makeup of the Southern flair Cape Cod remains intact. It's still a heavenly haven for family and friends.



The original claw tub, circa 1917, is today a favorite fixture in

the children's bathroom